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**GLOBALIZACIJA I
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GLOBALIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.
"Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."
"How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.
"You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here."

(Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865)

Abstract

Despite the fact that the term "globalization" has been present in anthropology and neighboring disciplines only since around 1990, it has spawned an impressive range of books, journal articles and academic conferences. Globalization can be studied in its economic, political, ecological, or cultural aspects, and there is a rich scholarly literature, much of it interdisciplinary, dealing with the subject. The present chapter focuses on the construction of ethnic/ national identities – especially taking into account the current migrant crisis in Europe, but also some recent political events (like the "Brexit" referendum in the UK), on the relationship between globalization and multiculturalism, as well as on the media influence in creating a global public opinion with certain types of values and orientations.

Key words: *globalization – anthropological perspectives; globalization and nationalism; ethnicity; media and globalization*

NELAGODNOSTI GLOBALIZACIJE

Apstrakt

Polazeći od istraživanja norveškog antropologa T. H. Eriksena, u radu se ukazuje na nekoliko aspekata globalizacije, pojma koji od početka 1990-ih dominira ideološkim i političkim aspektima savremenog sveta. Pošto je nemoguće obuhvatiti sve segmente u kojima globalizacija utiče na savremeni svet, u ovom poglavlju se posebna pažnja posvećuje elementima konstrukcije identiteta (kao otklona od drugih/ drugačijih) – posebno u svetlu izbegličke krize, ali i kao posledicu nekih skorašnjih političkih događaja (kao što je referendum o izlasku Velike Britanije iz Evropske Unije), zatim odnosu između globalizacije i multikulturalizma, kao i uticaju medija na globalizaciju savremenog javnog mnjenja i propagiranje određenih vrednosnih stavova i orijentacija.

Ključne reči: *globalizacija – antropološke perspektive; globalizacija i nacionalizam; etnicitet; mediji i globalizacija*

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INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper indicates a continuing interest in an important subject. It has also been my interest for a number of years – as a matter of fact, the present chapter is a thoroughly revised and updated version of the paper originally published in Portuguese in 2000 (Boskovic 2000), so it was both written and published *before* Stiglitz’s book with the same title (Stiglitz 2002). Also, in my original considerations of the term “globalization,” and following up on the research for my Ph.D., I was very much inspired by Freud’s little book, written in 1929 (Freud 1961). Just as in the original title of his essay, Freud used the German term *das Unbehagen* (“uneasiness”), I believe that there is a great deal of uneasiness around this key contemporary term. This uneasiness then influences how people react to the concept, its real or imagined meanings, and its consequences.

According to one of the leading scholars on the topic, globalization “generally refers to processes leading to the increased density, speed, and reach of transnational connections, associated with the global spread of capitalism and new information and communication technologies” (Eriksen 2011: 671; cf. also Eriksen 2007). According to the same author,

Various parts of the world had been interconnected, and there was considerable awareness of this, long before the coinage of the term globalization. Yet it can be argued that there is something new to the present world, the world that began roughly with the end of the cold war in 1989–1990, and that goes a long way to explain the rise of public interest in globalization and transnational phenomena more generally. Three factors, roughly coinciding in time, may be mentioned.

- The end of the cold war itself entailed a more encompassing global integration. The global two-bloc system, which had lasted since the 1940s, had made it difficult to think of geopolitics, transnational communication, and international trade in terms not dictated by the opposition between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies. With the dissolution of this conflict, the world appeared to have become a single marketplace.
- The Internet, which had existed in an embryonic form since the late 1960s, began to grow exponentially around 1990. Throughout the 1990s, media buzzwords were about bandwidths, websites, portals, “the new economy,” and its business opportunities. The World Wide Web was introduced in 1992–1993, around the same time as many academics and businesspeople became accustomed to using e-mail for their daily correspondence. Cell phones became ubiquitous in the rich countries and eventually in the poorer ones. The impact of this double delocalization—the physical letter replaced by e-mail, the fixed phone line replaced by the wireless mobile—on the everyday life of millions of people has been considerable.
- Identity politics—nationalist, ethnic, religious, territorial—was at the forefront of the international agenda, both from above (states demanding homogeneity or engaging in ethnic cleansing) and from below (minorities demanding rights or secession). The Salman Rushdie affair, itself an excellent example of the globalization of ideas, began with the issuing of a fatwa by Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini following the publication of Rushdie’s allegedly blasphemous novel *The Satanic Verses* in 1988. It soon became apparent that Rushdie could move freely nowhere in the world since the fatwa had global implications. Only two years later, Yugoslavia dissolved, with ensuing civil wars based on ethnic differences. In the same period, debates about immigration and

multiculturalism came to dominate political discourse in several Western countries, while the Hindu nationalists of the Bharatiya Janata Party came to power in India. (Eriksen 2011: 671)

GLOBALIZING IDENTITIES

The massive shifts of populations across the European continent, especially following the crisis in Middle East and the destruction of Libya and Syria put the focus on issues of national identity, as something constructed against "others." It also coincided with several occasions of nationalist sentiments taking over, for example in the so-called "Brexit" referendum in the UK. English nationalism, although largely dormant, led to the rise of the UKIP and other fiercely anti-European and anti-immigrant groups in Britain. It is a well-known fact that in multi-ethnic societies (and in Europe it certainly means all of them), nationalism of the dominant group is rarely (if ever) openly asserted — it is usually just "there," incorporated in the way(s) in which people talk, act, or behave. Thus, certain cultural traits of the dominant group are not identified as different cultural traits, but as models of proper behavior pure and simple. Since the English nationalism was the dominant one within the UK (and for the present discussion, it is irrelevant whether this dominance was actual or symbolic), it did not have to specifically reassert itself. On the other hand, other nationalisms (Irish, Scottish, Welsh) asserted themselves primarily in relation to what they perceived as "Englishness."¹

Things become slightly more complicated when put in a wider context of the Western European integration processes. For example, in the current political situation in the UK, Scotland might take another referendum on independence, and it is quite likely that the results will be different from the ones in 2015. Scots would prefer to be independent, but as part of the EU, or in some form of association with the EU. This sounds quite contradictory, since why would a nation claim a portion of its own sovereignty from a national state — and then just delegate it to a supra-national entity? Why claim something if you want to give it away? On the other hand, already throughout the 1990s, majority of English people expressed serious reservations towards some European integration processes - especially when it comes to the common monetary policy. It seems that they felt as if they already have their own sovereignty — and saw no justification for delegating it to a larger entity. Of course, any discussion of one's national identity and perceived injustices (past and present) presupposes a certain measure of uncertainty and fear. Self-confident people do not look for retreat in the mythic categories like nation, history, or tradition. Confident people do not need escape to the mythic realm of imagined tradition, offered by nationalism.

The reason for this insecurity should be sought in one of the most apparent consequences of globalization. Canadian sociologists Arthur and Marylouise Kroker mentioned the strategy of "bunkering in" and "dumbing down." In words of French theorist Ignacio Ramonet (1995): "In today's democracies, an increasing number of free citizens feel bogged down, glued down by a kind of sticky dogma which is in the process of surreptitiously engulfing any contrary way of thought by inhibiting it, by disturbing it, by paralyzing it and in the end, by squeezing it shut." Threatened by the developments which goes beyond their power of understanding (and, in some cases at least, even their power of imagination), many people choose to retreat into their own little shelters, take things as simply and as straightforward as possible, and just cordon

¹ Ladislav Holy makes the same argument for the Czech nationalism in his book (Holy 1996), and the same could be said about the Serbs in the former Yugoslavia.

themselves off against threatening influences of the outside world. This also leads to various forms of racism and xenophobia – since any form of otherness (especially other race or other culture) is seen as dangerous. (Racial and xenophobic incidents most often happen in the poorer areas — in the council housing projects — and this is the case not just with Britain, but with other Western European countries as well.) This feeling of being threatened is carefully exploited by another new segment of the society, moguls of the new digital era, what Krokors call "a virtual class."

This virtual class is a direct consequence of the new digital revolution, and their most prevalent characteristic is dominance of the "predatory self" — a kind of ruthless capitalism which seeks to maximize the profit while at the same time minimizing costs — regardless of the social or political price. Just like the industrial revolution a century ago, digital revolution raised many hopes and promised a better society for all. If just technology take over, we were told, machines will do most of the work, produce more output (which will lead to the adequate increase in profit), so the humans will have more free time (or "quality time"). Of course, things did not quite turn out that way. People advocating new technologies forgot to mention that they also mean loss of jobs (and loss of income) — as a matter of fact, some of the developed countries that fully embraced new digital technologies were the first ones to feel the unwanted consequences of the rise in unemployment rate. At the same time, one should also remember that

[b]ack in the early nineteenth century, the spread of the new industrial technologies freed no slaves. On the contrary, the invention of the cotton gin and mechanical spinning machines actually reinforced the archaic and brutal institutions of slavery in the Old South. (Barbrook 1995)

To sum up, a feeling of "being threatened" is a feeling of losing one's own identity. Fear of an English person that she/he would lose some intrinsic values related to her/his identity if she/he give in to "Europe." The fact that UK is in fact part of Europe (whether Eurosceptics there like it or not) then comes as a surprise.

GLOBAL CHANGES AND LOCAL FUTURES

Global changes are taking place, while at the same time affecting particular cultures, societies, and individual lives. This throws new light to the relationship between the universal and the particular. It is paradoxical that at the same time when the world is increasingly enveloped in the processes of globalization, particular cultures and identities also seek ways to express themselves. All of these changes are related to new communication technologies — communication is the leading superstition of the contemporary world, and at one point at least, it promised that we will be able to regulate everything. As long as something could be communicated, it would have been subject to a rational control. Of course, things did not turn that way — an explosion of particular identities in the early 1990s threatened to push Europe into chaos (from the point of view of its leading politicians). At the height of the integration processes and attempts to regulate world trade, world economy, and world investment markets, local nationalisms started claiming a place for themselves. Besides insecurity arising from uncertainties related to their own (local, national) particular identities, this trend should also be seen in light of the advent of the discourse that preached free market as its gospel.

Free of what or for what? The very idea that an undeveloped country could compete on a global plane with more developed countries (such as the "G8" for example) seems a bit strange. Economies of the EU countries and the US are still very much centrally regulated — especially when it comes to their agricultural policies. This is just one of the reasons why the gospel of

free market does not always convince peoples on the margins of the developed world. Another reason is fear of losing specific national traditions – and blending them into a global, pan-national whole. Although this fear can easily be understood on the emotional level, it is too late. As Talal Asad remarked in 1979, what really matters today (and I would add, even more so today than when he wrote his article) is the movement of the global capital. (Krokers call this new economic system pan-capitalism.) What happens in a particular culture or society is important, but mostly on the particular level. Changes within particular societies are effected through the behavior of global multinational corporations. It does seem that it is money that makes the world go 'round.

MULTICULTURALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

This brings us to another notion that is becoming more popular - multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is not something new, but in a situation where people feel threatened, they can easily transform their fear into the anger or even rage, and turn it against anything or anyone which they perceive as different. Members of different races or cultures are the most obvious targets, and recent rise in racist and xenophobic attacks on minorities or refugees throughout Western Europe can easily be correlated to the increasing social and financial insecurity, as well as to the advent of new technologies. This is why multiculturalism is perceived as a threat by representatives of various extreme nationalist, neo-fascist or right-wing parties and organizations. The idea is that the multiplicity of other cultures or traditions would lead "our" culture or tradition into oblivion. So great is their fear, that they perceive any comparison between their own and any other culture as potentially hazardous for their tradition, society, history, etc. In more benign forms of this type of criticism, national (local) politicians (the ones who believe that they can speak only from and for a particular point of view) warn against allowing different cultures the right to assert themselves – and they use the example of the former Yugoslavia as a case study of what happens if multiculturalism is allowed to roam freely.

On the other hand, multiculturalism is also perceived as a threat by some liberal or left-wing theorists. For example, Peter Lamborn Wilson was more than clear: "Let there be no mistake: multiculturalism is a strategy designed to save 'America' as an idea, and as a system of social control. Each of the many cultures that make up the nation are now to be allowed a little measure of self-identity and a few simulacra of autonomy." It is all just an elaborated conspiracy, designed to draw attention away from more serious things – since various cultures can exist only at the periphery of the centrally designed, authorized Civilization. (This Civilization is here understood to be the dominant culture of a nation or a society. Obviously, this assumption also presupposes a belief that there can be such a culture.) "Multiculturalism must be destroyed!", concludes Wilson.

I understand "multiculturalism" in the most literal sense — to mean a multiplicity of cultures. Thus, they necessarily interact and influence each other. As such, they are one of the favorite targets of the xenophobes and racists. On the other hand, there are people who did not spare the time or the effort to prove that the coexistence of different cultures is impossible — and the war and destruction of the former Yugoslavia presents a good example (cf. also Geertz 1993). In this context, *multiculturalism* is perceived as a threat — a threat to the already established world-order, where there is a sharp and clear-cut distinction between "ourselves" ("our" culture, tradition, life values, and everything that goes with it) and "others" (as everything that is foreign or alien, everything that could potentially undermine "our" culture, tradition, life values, and everything that goes with it).

Multiculturalism is definitively not something new. It was there long before the 16th century expansion of Western powers. It was certainly there two thousand years ago in the Mediterranean, when it was quite normal for every merchant (especially in the Levant) to speak four or five different languages. The shock and horror as a reaction to “others” is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Therefore, we are not exactly in the position from which famous German ethnologist and writer Adolf Bastian in 1881 remarked that

For us, primitive societies (*Naturvölker*) are ephemeral, that is, as regards our knowledge of, and our relations with them, in fact, inasmuch as they exist for us at all. At the very instance they become known to us they are doomed.

(quoted in Fabian 1991: 194)

The image of other worlds is constantly being distorted and remodeled, based on different media assumptions, and it is mostly presented through the globalized media. In the globalized world, these distorted images then sift back even to the ones that they are (were) supposed to represent. For some people, mostly advocates of various racist or xenophobic views, this is a threat. Thus, many right-wing politicians see it as a threat. Actually, they also fear the way in which new global corporations perceive even their “home” countries (countries where they have originated) as just another area (or space) to be colonized. In a world of multinational corporations, even citizens of the most highly industrialized countries are treated as some “Third World” subjects. A whole new class (“virtual class” – see Kroker and Kroker 1995) is emerging.

It is interesting that people from both poles of the political spectrum perceive multiculturalism as a threat. On the one hand, it is seen as a way of losing one's own identity (with the underlying assumption that there can be such a thing as “pure” or “original” cultural identity), while on the other, it is seen as constructing some form of a “false consciousness,” diverting the oppressed from their struggle for liberation. It is also a bit amusing to see how “left-wing” theorists like Žižek and Wilson start with different premises, but still reach a similar conclusion like the populist politicians like Donald J. Trump in the US or Marine Le Pen in France. What both of these types of criticism have in common is that they attempt to reconcile the dichotomy between universalism and particularism. On the practical level, critics of multiculturalism fail to realize that being pro- or anti- multicultural is not really an option any more. Just like in the case of some prominent British Europhobes, who refused to realize that Britain is part of Europe, multiculturalism is not really an option any more. The processes of globalization have enveloped the world so thoroughly, that we all in fact inhabit a global village. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say: a global market.

FROM GLOBAL MARKET TO THE END OF HISTORY

In the global market, the basic rules are the ones of offer and demand. Of course, the demand has to be constructed first, so that the offer could be modified accordingly. The most obvious construction in recent years occurred in the area of communication and information. Moguls of the new information technologies did their best to persuade people around the globe that what they really need is more information – not any information, of course, but the one carefully selected and filtered. With mergers of large news and information companies, the quest towards a unified information space becomes more obvious. With the unified information space, a dream of every multinational corporation – a unified, ideal customer – is close to its realization. A unified customer would not require different marketing strategies, so even less effort (and lower costs). The globalization of media is played out in lesser developed countries

(like Serbia) in such a way that the advertising is practically prohibited from the outlets critical of the government, which should eventually lead to their disappearance.

This global market is incompatible with borders and trade barriers. Instead of "the end of history" proclaimed after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it seems that we are actually heading for "the end of geography" – at least, geography as we knew it. Erasing of borders goes hand in hand with consolidating borders and erecting new walls – even literally, for example, in the way contemporary Hungarian government is dealing with the refugee crisis.

Of course, every attempt to universalize carries in itself the seeds of its own destruction. Just as all the great empires in human history crumbled when they became too large, it is easy to see how the quest towards globalization in all spheres of life might turn against globalization itself. Some elements can already be seen in the emergence of a new fundamentalism that is violently anti-technological and anti-multicultural. This fundamentalism gains enormous strength from the obvious fact that more technological innovation in many cases (and in increasing number of countries) means more economic hardship and more social turmoil. It also takes as one of its starting premises that technology is bad by itself – a technophobic attitude that has had a long history in the Western social sciences – from Ferdinand Tönnies, Oswald Spengler, and Pitirim Sorokin.

Even more importantly, the new technologies have enabled the emergence of new information networks that allow interactive communication – like the Internet. Even though almost 95 per cent of all the content on the Net is commercial, this medium also allows for an unprecedented amount of freedom of expression. The most important aspect is that for the first time, various marginal groups (gays and lesbians, ethnic minorities, women, etc.) are able to express themselves and present their views to a wider audience. Native Americans have been particularly successful in this, but perhaps one of the most striking examples was related to the rebellion of the Tzotzil Maya Indians – better known as the Zapatistas² – in the forests of Chiapas, which began on the New Year's Day 1994. Mexican government treated rebel Indians and peasants as simple outlaws, until, as witnessed by a government official, Zapatistas set up their own Web page. Suddenly, their views could be read by millions of people worldwide. Even though they remained militarily and politically marginal, the rebels have been invited to enter negotiations with the Mexican government.

This is just one example of the actual power of the Internet. Of course, one of the most important tasks of any globalizing and unifying force is to try to limit the alternative voices or opinions – thus, in recent years there were several attempts to institute censorship of the WWW. Of course, all forms of communication (and this includes electronic communication) can be monitored and probably are being monitored by various legal or semi-legal government agencies. However, the sheer amount of growth of the communication networks, and the amount of information circulating all the time, makes the task of monitoring all the communication practically impossible. This is a nightmare for any political system based on the central control and authority – and a potential Heaven for anarchists.

However, as put by the British Net theorist Richard Barbrook more than two decades ago:

Contrary to the predictions of the pessimists, it is possible to win the struggle against both the political and economic censorship of cyberspace. Although the state can – and should – prosecute the small minority paedophiles and fascists, the resources needed to spy on

² Interestingly enough, this name connects them (providing a sort of a legendary identity) with one of the legendary Mexican revolutionary leaders in the 1910s, Emiliano Zapata. Zapata was not Mayan, but his name provides a powerful metaphor with which many ordinary people could identify.

everyone's email and Web sites will make the imposition of moral puritanism very difficult to enforce (...) The social nature of hypermedia is the best defence of the individual's right of freedom of expression. (Barbrook 1995)

This is, I should add, an optimist outlook. Pessimists have a lot to say about the same things, beginning with the concrete examples – with the rise of the populist movements and the extreme right-wing movements throughout Europe (Hungary, Poland), USA, Russia, and Turkey – with pathetic attempts at flirting with dictatorship in countries like Macedonia and Serbia.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A GLOBAL IDENTITY?

It is difficult to say whether particular identities are or will become subsumed under something like the global identity, or whether some emerging mega-identity will just encompass all of them. While the drive towards centralization could certainly lead to an institution of some hypothetical globalizing or universalizing entity, there seems to be quite a number of marginal, destabilizing forces that make this project impossible. This is good, since proliferation of ideas and attitudes can only improve our abilities to comprehend both the nature and the impact of changes that are taking place, and directions where they might lead us in the future. Following the work of Bataille, I would like to suggest that by itself, technology is neither good nor bad – it simply *exists*. It all depends on how we use it and what do we do with it. Recent developments have shown that humans have the capability (and eagerness) to use technology for destruction (in fact, until recently, almost 70 per cent of all the science research was done either directly for the military purposes, or sponsored by the military). On the other side, recent developments have also enabled marginalized groups to finally voice their concerns and opinions – and to know that their voices will be heard. This situation opens numerous challenges and possibilities – but it is impossible to predict how things will develop in the immediate future. In a telling aftermath of the most recent presidential elections in France, the defeated right-wing nationalist and populist candidate claimed that the country was divided into “globalists” (the side of the winner, her opponents) and “patriots.”³ This is a vivid illustration of the attitudes and values that the opponents of globalization subscribe to – but, fortunately, it might be too little too late. What is certain is that processes of globalization have permanently altered our planet – and that we can only profit from the understanding of these processes. At no cost.

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³ For the definition of “patriotism” relevant to my understanding of the term, see Bierce (1909).

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